

DREAMERS AND DOERS



The following is a keynote address which was delivered by Walt Disney Productions President, E. Cardon Walker, at the first academic convocation at the Florida Institute of Technology, January 13, 1976.

The address, "Dreamers and Doers" was delivered to an audience composed of faculty, members of the student body and distinguished guests of the scientifically oriented school. At the conclusion, FIT President, Jerome P. Keuper, conferred an honorary Doctor of Science degree on Card. The degree was the first of its kind in the school's history.

Good Morning, Dr. Miller, Dr. Keuper, distinguished members of the faculty, Board of Trustees and the Student Body of the Florida Institute of Technology.

When Dr. Keuper invited us a while back to participate in your important convocation today . . . two thoughts crossed my mind.

First, I was truly pleased and extremely honored to be invited to address an audience as important and sophisticated as this.

But then, I really didn't feel qualified to stand up here and tell you people, the real present and future experts, all about the technical challenges and complexities of our changing world. I'm sure that most of you here today have spent much more time studying that subject than I.

But even though I'm not a scientific or technical expert, I do know that to bridge the gap between scientific research and its practical application to everyday life requires creativity, dedication and good business sense.

In a way, you must not only be a dreamer, but a doer. This is perhaps where I can contribute something of value for you today from my own experience and first-hand observations.

My entire business career, approaching 38 years, has been spent with one company, Walt Disney Productions.

I have had the opportunity to see our organization change dramatically in that time . . . to grow from a producer of short subject cartoons to an organization worldwide in scope, which will play a very unique role in this changing world of ours.

To start with, I'd like to talk for a few moments about a man I risked with very closely for 28 years . . . who in his very own

through his own expression, was the personification of American dreams. And that's Walt Disney. I personally feel that he touched in a positive way perhaps more people's around the world than almost anyone else in this century.

Obviously it is his that every scientist and every culture gifted with great dreams and creative thinkers. The people who have the ability to conceptualize, to envision, new ideas. In fact, I think there's a little bit of that "inventor" in all of us. Who here hasn't said at one point "Wouldn't it be great if . . . ?" And yet remarkably few of us are ever gifted with that other important ability . . . the ability to transform our ideas into real, practical working reality!

These rare people are the "dreamers and doers."

When they come along in a free society, they almost always leave an indelible mark and take their place in history. As a business man, I believe Walt Disney was one of the greatest dreamers and doers of this century . . . and I'm certainly not alone in that evaluation.

As recently as 1970, NATION'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE asked its sophisticated readers to select the top ten business men in American History, and they ranked Walt Disney number 5 . . . behind Henry Ford, Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, and Andrew Carnegie . . . and ahead of John D. Rockefeller, Benjamin Franklin, Bernard Baruch, Thomas Watson of IBM and George Eastman of Eastman Kodak.

Walt once told me, early in my career, "Card, the way to get started on something is to stop talking and start doing." This was his personal motivation . . . a philosophy that helped carry our entire Disney organization to where it is today.

A lot of giant entertainment organizations rose and fell around us, while Walt and his brother Roy took us through depressions and booms . . . recessions and wars. Through times of economic stress and crisis. And through times of relative world stability.

Walt always had us dreaming and doing at the same time. And every time people around our organization thought things were settling down into a nice little business, Walt stirred us up again, taking on something else that was always a little bit new . . . different . . . imaginative . . . and exciting.

As far back as 1929, right after Al Johnson's "Jazz Singer" became the first talking picture, Walt introduced the first cartoon with sound, starring Mickey Mouse as "Steamboat Willie".

Soon we had a great little business going in black-and-white sound cartoons, but one day in 1932, Walt heard about a new process being developed called technicolor. We had a cartoon called, "Flowers and Trees" almost completed in black-and-white, but Walt shelved the footage and had us completely remake it in color.

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FROM STEAMBOAT WILLIE TO EPCOT CENTER DREAMERS AND DOERS

(Remarks by E. Gordon Walker)



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Then, he absolutely scared us all to death by betting the entire Company's future on a full-length animated film. Nobody . . . but nobody . . . thought people would sit still for a full-length cartoon. There almost wasn't enough money to finish it. In fact, Walt and the bankers were losing more sleep than he was.

But we finally got it finished. It was called "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," and the rest is history. You probably know about it because you grew up with it.

Incidentally, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" has been back in theatres numerous times since its first release in 1938. Millions of people around the world have now seen it.

Another Disney innovation came with the release of "Fantasia" in 1940. This unique film was the first motion picture ever to be released in stereophonic sound.

Well, this kind of reaching out never stopped. Walt always had us getting into something else we had never tried before. He was always dreaming and doing.

In fact, to build one little project, he not only had to borrow everything he had right up to the absolute limit, he even cashed in his personal insurance policy and put his own savings into it. And a lot of people thought it was the craziest idea of all. It was called "Disneyland." Around Hollywood, it was also called "Disney's Folly."

By the way, "Disney's Folly" has hosted over half the population of the United States since opening July 17, 1955, and is still one of the most popular vacation locations for people all over the world.

To start with, I'd like to tell you about a man I worked with very closely for 28 years . . . who, in his very own way, through his own expression, was the personification of the American dream — **Walt Disney**. He touched more people's lives around the world in a positive way than almost anyone else in this century.

Actually, it seems that every society and every culture is filled with great dreamers and creative thinkers . . . the people who have the ability to conceptualize fantastic new ideas. In fact, there's a little bit of that "creativity" in all of us. Who here hasn't said at one point, "Wouldn't it be great if . . . ?" And yet, remarkably few of us are ever gifted with that other important ability . . . the ability to transform our ideas into real, practical, working reality.

These rare people are the "dreamers and doers." When they come along in a free society, they almost always leave an indelible mark and take their place in history. In my opinion, Walt Disney was one of the greatest dreamers and doers of this century, and I'm certainly not alone in that evaluation.

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Walt Disney launched our Company on the most significant decade of growth in its history and laid out for us new projects that may occupy us throughout the remainder of this century. But by far, the most exciting project of all was, and still is, in Central Florida.

The Walt Disney World Resort Complex now has a total investment that ranks with some of America's largest industries, and we are just getting started.

Walt Disney did not come to Florida just to build another amusement park, or even a destination vacation resort. For this last and greatest dream he had something far more important in mind, more important than any of us realized at the time.

Walt was looking far beyond his lifetime—to the creation of what he called "Epcot . . . and Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow. This is what he said about Epcot in 1966:

"I don't believe there's a challenge anywhere in the world that's more important to people everywhere than finding solutions to the problems of our cities. But where do we begin how do we start answering this great challenge?"

"Well, we're convinced we must start with the public need. And the need is not just for curing the old needs of old cities. The need is for starting from scratch on virgin land and building a special kind of new community."

So that's what Epcot is . . . an experimental prototype community that is always in the state of becoming. It will never cease to be a living blueprint of the future, where people actually live a life they can't find anywhere else today in the world."

Everything in Epcot Center is dedicated to the happiness of the people who will live and work and play here . . . and to those who come here from all around the world to visit our living showcase.

If there were one sentence expressing our basic Epcot philosophy, it would be this: "Epcot Center is designed to respond to the needs of people by providing an international forum where creative men and women of science, industry, government, and arts can develop, demonstrate, and communicate prototype concepts, and new systems and technologies, and their application in creating better ways of life."

Walt Disney's dream was Epcot Center, to make that dream a reality, in the initial planning stages seven specific objectives were established:

First, Epcot Center will provide a forum where industry and the professions can introduce, test, and demonstrate new ideas, materials, and systems.

Second, Epcot Center will showcase and prove the usefulness of pioneering concepts, technology, and specific prototype products.

Third, Epcot Center will provide an ongoing "meeting place" where creative people of science and industry from around the world may gather for days or weeks or months in a community and climate where experimentation is fundamental, to discuss and develop specific solutions to the specific needs of mankind.

Fourth, Epcot Center will advance the excellence in Futures planning.

Fifth, Epcot Center will be a special kind of community one not restricted by brick and mortar, but instead one that is constantly seeking the best ideas and constantly communicating those ideas to the world community.

Sixth, Epcot Center will provide, for the first time anywhere, a practical basis for investigating and proving not only the popularity, but also the economic feasibility, of new ideas, materials and systems introduced and tested here.

And seventh, through Epcot Center we will create and nurture the broadest possible communication link and dialogue between the general public and world leaders.

Everything we have accomplished at Walt Disney World has been dedicated to the Epcot Center objectives. From the very

beginning, we introduced new systems and technologies as forerunners of future growth.

Advanced new building codes were adopted by the **Reedy Creek Improvement District**, which gave us the flexibility to engage new construction techniques—including the world's first use of lightweight steel modular construction in two of our hotels.

We developed a Central Energy Plant powered by jet engines running on clean-burning natural gas. And we captured waste heat from the exhausts for hot water and air-conditioning.

We established new techniques in environmental management and protection. More than 90 miles of canals were built for a complex network of water control throughout the property.

We have waste-water treatment plant which furnished treated water for irrigation at our experimental tree farm. Incidentally, we have been using this effluent on eucalyptus trees and obtaining a growth rate of one foot per month.

In Tomorrowland, we installed the first linear induction motor-powered transportation system of its kind in the world.

This system, used on the WEDway PeopleMover, is the forerunner of new transportation systems for congested cities and urban shopping areas. One of the first implementations of this transportation system was at the Houston Airport.

Actually, these experiments and new innovations have caused as much press curiosity and interest as our entertainment facilities. David Brinkley spoke on national television one evening shortly after we opened about the city-like aspects of Walt Disney World.

"Peter Blake, the architectural editor of 'New York Magazine,' recommends that all of New York City's town planning work be turned over to the Walt Disney 'Mickey Mouse' organization because they seem to be the only people in America who are able to get anything done. Now don't laugh. When you look around at this area that they have built here in Central Florida, you will think he is right."

"It is the most imaginative and effective piece of urban planning in America. And that is totally aside from the Mickey Mouse amusement park area itself. It is outside the park on Disney's own land, which is about twice the size of Manhattan. On this, they have built roads, transportation systems, lakes, golf courses, campgrounds, riding stables, stores, and hotels. And they all fit together in a setting of land, air, and water better than any other urban development in America."

"We all remember many years ago those quick, futuristic drawings saying that the future of American cities was going to be—glossing buildings, fast movements, people in one place, and in another. Well, this is the future and none of this has happened. Nobody has done it except Disney."

In preparing Epcot Center research and development, we have confirmed to implement a number of experimental prototype ideas at Walt Disney World. These new concepts will always be in a state of becoming, giving voice to an optimistic future and confidence in human ability to solve critical world problems.

In November 1977, Walt Disney World put into operation a two-story office building specifically designed for a unique solar energy concept. The building uses over 4,000 square feet of parabolic collectors that provide 100 percent of the building's space heating and hot water, and approximately 50 percent of the air conditioning.

Faced with designing energy systems to heat and cool the major Epcot Center facilities, a state of the art system was designed by WED Enterprises. The central plant utilizes heat pumps, chilled water storage, waste and heat recovery systems, and a computer for control. This system will permit the extraction of heat from ground water and will enable the selection of duty-cycle operation to match low-cost power periods for cost effectiveness.

We have developed a method to use water in acorns as a medium to purify treated wastewater by absorbing nutrients and filtering solids through their root network. Initially, harvested plants are composted to provide a soil conditioner. Future activity includes producing methane gas through anaerobic digestion of the plant. Such a system can dramatically reduce the cost of wastewater treatment for small communities as well as produce a soil conditioner and fuel.

In conjunction with the U.S. Department of Energy, we have also developed a solid waste reduction and energy conversion system which will result in supplying approximately 15 percent of the Kerdh Creek Utilities Company, Inc. high temperature hot water requirements at the Walt Disney World Resort Complex.

A demonstration project is also underway to enhance the demand for electric vehicles. Monthly reports are made to the Department of Energy to be used in assessing the economics and technical feasibility of electric vehicle use in the future.

Aside from focusing on new technologies throughout Walt Disney World, Epcot Center will be a vast new showplace for the concepts and technologies of tomorrow and the nations of today.

This \$800 million project is the realization of Walt Disney's last and greatest dream for an Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow. It will include participation from many of the United States' largest corporations and representation from nations around the world.

Epcot Center is a "Community of Ideas," encompassing two principle themes: **Future World** and the **World Showcase**.

Future World will pose the challenges and preview the alternatives for the "Community of the Future." Here, a series of major pavilions will explore vital topics facing us today.

World Showcase will be a "Community of Nations," the only permanent international exposition of its kind anywhere, focusing on the cultures, traditions, tourism, and accomplishments of people around the world.

To further this people-to-people exchange, there will be an **International Village** where young people from the participating nations will live, play, and learn together. These young people will be scheduled for one year only so that as many individuals as possible will have the opportunity of this experience and the chance to share it vacuously with their fellow citizens back home. It is very exciting to think about the people-to-people exchange and the potential of this sharing among future leaders of the major nations around the world.

We could someday see the day when the president of one country calls the president of another country and alerts the conversation by recalling their year together in Epcot Center.

We may someday see a day when technical problems affecting the people of two countries is solved through a satellite TV conversation between scientists who were once roommates in the Epcot International Village.

Yes, these are big dreams, and they are never-ending, and you may be wondering why the original "Mickey Mouse Company" is involved in these kinds of projects. Why is a company whose basic thrust is entertainment and recreation suddenly dealing simultaneously with international relations and technologies?

Walt Disney was a master communicator who could reach out and touch people in all countries through his medium because he really speaks a kind of international language. He felt strongly that the answer to critical problems facing the world today are not locked in government agencies or corporate boardrooms—but locked in people's minds, in universities, business and industry, in a thousand places where creative people practice their "thing" around the world.

Somebody just had to come along and help pull it all together and coordinate to the world. This, Walt felt, could be the greatest contribution of his lifetime.

Unfortunately, he was only just getting started when he died in 1966. But he knew realistically that no one man or company could make this dream a reality. The world is too complex today for even one nation alone to accomplish this goal.

Government and industry have both lost the trust of much of the American public. Opinion polls indicate that the majority of people no longer believe that the actions of companies and government agencies are motivated by a genuine concern for improving the quality of life. As a result, democracy and free enterprise are coming under increasing attack, both at home and around the world.

At the same time, the public is becoming increasingly aware of the complex nature of the problems facing all people. They have a need to know what is being done to solve these problems.

Now, we all know the free enterprise system isn't perfect—but what system is? But it's by far and away the best system that has ever yet been devised. And we do know that our free enterprise and our democratic institutions are proven viable, self-correcting systems, absolutely unexcelled in history, bringing out the best in people. We have dedicated the achievement of Walt Disney's concept for Epcot Center to the belief that public trust can and must be strongly reaffirmed in our democratic institutions and our free enterprise system. We think that this is where Epcot Center can play a major role in today's society.

Yes, we are dreamers—but we are also doers. And before you think we are just "do-gooders," let me point out that every one of our projects has a free enterprise business potential—a potential that will provide new jobs and new business career opportunities in fields that don't exist today.

These are the results of what one man's dreaming and doing could be—working through and with others.

Governments, companies, and academic institutions are still run by people—and only people can improve themselves and change the direction of their lives.

You can sit, contemplate, talk, and debate about the world until it passes you right by.

Or you can stand up and become a doer. I sincerely hope that all of you, wherever you are headed, whatever your goals, will say that you do count—that your efforts do count—that you will become not just dreamers, but dreamers and doers.

Walt  isney World.